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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this curricular unit intended for use at the secondary level is to provide an explanation for racial polarization by reviewing some of the violent developments in 20th century America as they affected Blacks. Main points and concepts are outlined for the teacher, beginning with a consideration of the hopes of Blacks during the elction cf Woodrow Wilson, then moving to a discussion of the consequences for Blacks of World War I and their postwar fight for a reaffirmation of their own dignity here in America. An analysis of the financed hate organizations of the 1930's begins with a study of the Ku Klux Klan phenomenon, and its relationship to American institutions. Consideration is given to the Communist Party's attempt and eventual failure to formulate a policy for the Blacks. Selected readings are detailed at the end of each topical section, and discussion/essay questions are appended covering the entire unit. See SO 000 351 and SO 000 354 for related documents. (JLB)

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EPDA History Institute
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V United States History--Chronological Integration of the Black Experience

TOTALITARIAN TENDENCIES - RACIAL POLARIZATION

1912 - 1940

By

Robert I. Jones

SP 000 353

This curricular unit was developed as a part of the work in the EPDA History Institute, "The Black Experience. A Comparative Study: The United States and Latin America," held at Smith College from June 23 to August 8, 1969. It is a first draft and has as yet not undergone classroom trial.

ED044343

Outline

I. Introduction to the Unit

II. Woodrow Wilson, The New Freedom, and the Black Hope

III. Normalcy - The Lighted Years, 1920's

IV. The Depression Decade, 1929-1939

V. Vocabulary for Student Use

VI. Unit Questions

VII. Bibliography

VIII. Unit Source Material

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I. Introduction to the Unit

In examining the hallowed documents of the United States government, many social scientists have described the philosophical platitudes and have contrasted these with the too often grim realities of American life. From our earliest history, certain groups and certain colors were denied equality. Landmarks of liberty seemed primed for exclusive patronage of those with white skin, of Protestant persuasion, and of certain national origins.

The chosen people were easily assimilated into the "American Way," but excluded individuals were often exposed to physical or verbal punishments in all aspects of their lives. This fear of people differing in background, culture, religion, or skin color, has affected American life from the beginning of our colonization period. At times it has been intense and burning; at other times it has been a sub rosa manifestation. Verbal or physical discrimination was practiced to thwart unwanted economic competition, to subvert foreign ideologies, to prevent miscegenation, or to joust with the unknown. In periods of unchecked fury, this fear has led to cruel and senseless brutality, especially for the Black American, who has felt the frenzy in the burnings of homes and churches, lynchings, and other terroristic acts. If not overtly sanctioned by responsible authorities, these crimes were often overlooked or irresponsibly handled. Violence has played a tragic role in our history.

Racism and nativism are not unique features in our lives, nor are they restricted to only one particular region of our land. Ample

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documentation is available to point to the emergence of patterns of hate throughout our history in many different settings. It is very difficult for any area to flaunt a self-righteous attitude.

This unit treats some of the violent developments in the twentieth century by focusing on the hopes of the Blacks during the election of Woodrow Wilson, and then moving to World War I, emphasizing the tragic consequences of that war for the Blacks. Following the allied victory, it traces the Black Man's fight for a reaffirmation of his own dignity in America. The United States became caught up in post war fears -- a fear of the Black migration northward, a red scare, and a fear that the old moral code was being destroyed.

As idealism faded and normalcy reigned in the twenties, the resurrected Ku Klux Klan marched in sheeted splendor to wrestle with the devils threatening 100% Americanism. Their targets, varying from state to state, would include the violator of "good" morals, the Black, the bootlegger, the union organizer, the foreigner, the Jew, and the Catholic. The phenomenon of the Klan embraced much of American institutional life, with the apogee of Klan strength reached in the 1924 election.

From the 1920's the unit dips into the Depression decade to illustrate the continued existence of well-financed hate organizations. The theme of anti-Semitism, linked with the Russian Revolution and then conveniently interwoven with labor organizing and the Black man, was often the catalyst that galvanized groups into waspish action. That these efforts in the 1920's and 1930's were not merely the psychotic excretions of maddened personalities is evidenced by the magnitude of the citizenry purchasing the literature and contributing to the

campaigns. This study concentrates on a few of themajor hate organizations to illustrate their philosophies, leaders, and goals.

In a continuing study, similar themes and conditions could be examined and perhaps historical generalizations gleaned. For example, great disappointments resulted from both major wars -- violence, deception, a hunt for scapegoats, abdication of authority, and blighted lives were parallel in both experiences. To complete the period of 1900-1969, this unit should include a study of McCarthyism, the splintered Klans of the 1950's, the White Citizens Councils, the American Nazi Party, and the John Birch Society.

An examination of these organizations and their patterns of thought and action would help the student learn the extent to which violence has permeated our history. As a reaction to the continued spirit of intolerance and racism in the land, the Blacks have polarized. The polarization, although not joined by all in the Black community, has intensified in the 1960's with the violent death of prominent white and black leaders.

The problems have been glossed over and the ambiguities have remained obscure in high school history courses. A study of racist and nativist behavior will give the student some understandings of the problems in our society and should provide him with a rationale to fight the hate that continues to erode trust and cooperation.

II. Woodrow Wilson, the New Freedom, and the Black Hope

A. The New Freedom, 1912

1. During the 1912 Presidential campaign, Woodrow Wilson promised to treat Blacks with fairness and with justice. These promises had been coupled with a pledge of economic equality.

2. A number of Black intellectuals such as W.E.B. DuBois were convinced that Woodrow Wilson, despite his Southern heritage, was not spouting campaign rhetoric in his promises to the Blacks of this nation. They believed in Wilson's sincerity and worked diligently for a Democratic victory. They chose to believe in the humanitarian Wilson and they approached the inaugural with high expectations.

3. The election of Woodrow Wilson in 1912 was marked by a higher per cent of Negro support than the Democratic Party had ever achieved.

4. The hopes of the Black community were soon shattered by announcements from the capital. The conservative Wilson had succumbed to the Southern wing of the party.

a. Segregation was introduced into such federal agencies as the Post Office and the Treasury Department.

b. Woodrow Wilson, by executive order, segregated most of the Black federal employees in eating and rest-room facilities.

c. Numerous legislative proposals advocating further discrimination were received in Congress.

d. Federal posts which had traditionally gone to Blacks were taken from them in a deliberate discriminatory policy.

B. The Blacks in World War I - "Making the World Safe for Democracy"

1. The United States Army inducted 367,000 Blacks. Approximately 33,000 Blacks served in the Navy. According to historian John Hope Franklin, approximately 31 per cent of the Blacks registering were accepted, while 26 per cent of the whites registering were accepted. This, he feels, is attributable not to superior physical and mental characteristics but to callous and discriminatory draft boards in the matter of exemptions.
2. There was no place for Blacks in the Army Air Force, the Coast Guard, or the Marines. Their chores in the Navy were chiefly of a menial capacity.
3. From the beginning, the Black press endorsed the war but made demands for military and civilian reforms to conform to the high ideals for which we supposedly marched to war.
4. The Black soldier was subjected to discriminatory treatment in the United States. Blacks were sometimes refused restaurant, lodging, theater, and recreational facilities available to the white serviceman.
5. Black soldiers were generally placed in segregated units led by white officers. After a determined struggle, Blacks were successful in establishing a camp to train Black officers.
   a. On October 15, 1917, at Fort DesMoines, Iowa, 639 Negroes were commissioned - 106 captains, 329 First Lieutenants, and 204 Second Lieutenants. Eventually 1,400 were to receive commissions. These officers were often to suffer from name-calling and from being ostracized.

b. No black fighting man, outside of a band officer or chaplain, received a higher ranking than captain.

6. Three-quarters of the approximately 200,000 Black troops that went overseas were in noncombatant labor duties. These troops suffered further discrimination as stevedores, orderlies, truck drivers, cooks, construction men, and other labor details.

7. Those Black troops assigned to the fighting front fought with real heroism. Individuals, companies, and regiments received medals and other honors for their accomplishments. The French were especially pleased with the fighting strength of the Black soldier.

8. American white officers and politicians were concerned about Black soldiers fraternizing with French women while in France. The French received a secret document, Secret Information Concerning Black Troops, that asserted that complete separation of Blacks and whites be strictly adhered to lest Blacks assault and rape white women.

a. The French paid little attention to the document.

b. Some white Americans were obviously fearful that the Black experience obtained in France would be detrimental to the inter-racial stability upon the Black soldiers return to the United States. This is to illustrate that the racist attitudes were so firmly entrenched in the minds of some that even a war fought ostensibly to protect and expand democracy couldnot seem to dislodge this type of thinking.

c. Claims that rape of white women was prevalent among Black troops in France was investigated by prominent individuals and found to be unsubstantiated in fact.

9. The Blacks had fought hard and honorably in Europe in World War I to save the world for democracy. They returned to the United States hoping that the spirit had reached this shore and that this nation, too, would be safe for democracy.

C. Race Riots, 1919

1. During World War I, large numbers of Blacks migrated to the North because of greater economic opportunities and the greater likelihood of being treated like a man instead of a child. It is estimated that 500,000 Blacks came North from 1915-1918. They clustered in the urban areas in the poorest dwellings, and generally receiving the poorest labor opportunities.

2. The growth of the Black community did provide greater numbers for the Black middle class, greater circulation for the Black press, and a greater sense of strength and militancy for the Black people.

   a. In his article, "We Return Fighting," W.E.B. DuBois presented a rationale for the returning Black serviceman to help bring about necessary reforms in the United States.

   b. Other leaders in the press outlined the needs of Black America immediately following World War I.

3. A series of race riots broke out in the savage year of 1919. Eighty people were lynched in that year, the highest number in a decade. Several reasons have been introduced as to why

the 1919 savagery broke out in various areas of this nation:

a. Walter White, head of the NAACP, stated the following items to explain the violence of 1919:

1) race prejudice

2) economic competition

3) political corruption and exploitation of Negro voters

4) police inefficiency

5) newspaper lies about Negro crimes

6) unpunished crimes against Negroes

7) poor housing

8) reaction of whites and Negroes from war

b. Other reasons that partially explain the 1919 violence would include:

1) fear of the New Negro coming home from war with ideas of social and political equality. "Put him in his place." There are instances of lynchings of Blacks with their uniforms still on.

2) Northerners worried about the tremendous migration to the cities. Whites were concerned about the security of their jobs.

3) Strict union membership confined many Blacks to those jobs not desired by the whites.

4) There was exploitation of Blacks by landlords and merchants.

4. Bitter disillusionment with Versailles, European wars, the Russian Revolution, and domestic issues had set in. A

resurgent nativism, sparked by wartime repression and propaganda methods, reappeared on the scene once again. It of course had never entirely disappeared. The world was no safer for democracy or for the Blacks than it had been before the sacrifice of men.

Readings :

A. The New Freedom

J.H. Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, chapter XXIV, pp. 452-476.
L.H. Fishel & B. Quarles, The Negro American: A Documentary History, chapter 9, pp. 362-364, pp. 390-401.
B.H. Ward, ed., Pictorial History of the Black American, page 49.

B. The Blacks in World War I - "Making the World Safe for Democracy"

K.G. Goode, From Africa to the United States and Then..., Chapter 24, pp. 117-120.
J.H. Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, chapter XXIV.
L.H. Fishel & B. Quarles, The Negro American: A Documentary History, pp. 363-364, pp. 399-401.
M. Meltzer, In Their Own Words: A History of the American Negro, vol. 3, pp. 24-25.
B. Ward, ed., Pictorial History of the Black American, p. 63.

C. Race Riots, 1919

W.J. Cash, The Mind of the South, pp. 301-308.
J.H. Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom, chapter XXV.
K.G. Goode, From Africa to the United States and Then..., p. 120.
R.T. Kerlin, The Voice of the Negro, 1919, pp. 75-100.
L.H. Fishel & B. Quarles, The Negro American: A Documentary History, pp. 403-410.
M. Meltzer, In Their Own Words: A History of the American Negro, vol. 3, pp. 23-35.
B. Ward, ed., Pictorial History of the Black American, p. 49.

III. Normalcy - The Blighted Years, 1920's

A. The New Klan

The new Klan was organized by William Joseph Simmons of Atlanta, Georgia. A member of many fraternal organizations, he had assigned himself the title of colonel. The first meeting of the resurgent Klan was held on top of Stone Mountain, east of Atlanta, on Thanksgiving, 1915. Thirty-four citizens of Georgia attended. The state of Georgia granted the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan a charter on December 4, 1915.

1. The Klan's growth was spurred on by Thomas Dixon Jr.'s, The Clansman, which D.W. Griffith filmed into "The Birth of a Nation." This two hour and forty-five minute film epic told the sensational story of "Black" Reconstruction and the threat to white supremacy through a white Southerners eyes. Stereotype was piled upon artistic stereotype. Created with great artistic filming skill, this epic had much to do with the new Klan rising out of well-deserved obscurity.
2. To make a money paying proposition out of the Klan, Simmons had the aid of two publicity agents, Edward Young Clarke and Mrs. Elizabeth Tyler. These two, through a well-advertised Klan campaign for membership, attracted thousands into the ranks of the Klan and thereby placed millions of dollars in their pockets through membership fees and by selling uniforms and other Klan regalia.
3. Klan organization was not restricted to only one location in the nation. Other substantially strong Klan groups were in

most geographic areas of the United States in the 1920's.

a. There were Klan leaders that operated almost autonomously from the central organization. They shared a portion of the initiation fee (the Klectoken) with the Simmon leadership but the local Klan leaders directed their groups to best suit the strongest hate or fear of that region. Some Klans were much more concerned with morality, enforcement of prohibition, anti-foreign feeling than with the Black problem.

b. Membership was open to a native-born white Protestant citizen, who was not affiliated with any foreign institution and who loved his country and his flag. Membership estimates of 4,000,000 - 4,500,000 have been made.

4. The goals of the Klan would include the following:

   a. Protection of traditional American values as defined by the Ku Klux Klan.

   b. Antagonism to Catholics, Jews, the foreign-born, and the Blacks.

   c. Securing legislation to stem the tide of immigration.

   d. Stopping the tide of Black emigration to the North.

   e. Upholding "law and order."

5. Several authors have different explanations for the success of the Ku Klux Klan in the years following World War I:

   a. "The war had simply suspended those animosities while American nationalism vented itself in other directions. Once the war and immediate postwar period passed, the two leading nativist traditions of the early twentieth century, Anglo-Saxonism and Anti-Catholicism reoccupied the field." J. Higham, Strangers In the Land, p. 266.

b. "But above all, because of their fears and their will, they were filled with hate for whatever differed from themselves and their ancient pattern. For hate, of course, is always and everywhere the correlative of fear: the mechanism which men most often fortify themselves against their terrors. And these men were superlatively ripe for hating. The organized propaganda of the war had drilled them in the habit of hate with a thoroughness and an intensity entirely without parallel in prior human history." W.J. Cash, The Mind of the South, p. 297.

c. "They sought new outlets for their pent-up animosities, and they found them by creating new enemies. The wartime messianic spirit and the drive for conformity became postwar hysteria. The year 1919 saw fearful America, spurred by the spectacle of bloody chaos in Bolshevik Russia, engage in a nationwide hunt for ubiquitous Communists, anarchists, and nihilists. Even modern Socialists and labor unionists were branded "radicals"." C. C. Alexander, The, Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest, p. 13.

B. Al Smith, 1924 and 1928

The new Klan was not just a one-party organization. It occupied, by 1924, powerful positions in both the Democratic and Republican parties.

a. The Klan issue in the 1924 Democratic Party Convention prevented the frontrunners-- William Gibbs McAdoo, Al Smith and Oscar W. Underwood --from winning sufficient delegate strength to receive the nomination. The Klan question split the Democratic Party ranks in the 1924 meeting.

b. The Democratic candidate, John W. Davis, attacked the Klan in his 1924 campaign and asked that Republican Calvin Coolidge [illegible] similarly repudiate the hooded order. The Republican Vice-Presidential candidate did make an anti-Klan speech; Silent Cal remained silent.

c. The Democratic Party, by 1928, decided that it could not afford another intramural free-for-all so Al Smith, the able New York governor, won his party's nomination. The major issues of the 1928 campaign were Smith's Catholicism, his Tammany association, and his opposition to Prohibition.

1) It should be said that Smith's overwhelming defeat administered by Herbert Hoover cannot be credited to the Klan nor to his religion. A number of important factors should be considered:

a) Prohibition feeling was strong.

b) Smith's voice, dress, and speech patterns were decidedly different from those of the American heartland.

c) The radio was beginning to play a role in political campaigns. It is possible that Hoover's twang appealed to more citizens than did Smith's New York accent.

d) The times were prosperous for the majority of white Americans, so why change parties?

e) Hoover had a good wartime reputation and had served in the Harding and Coolidge administrations.

2) Hoover's self-made man image and his administrative experience gained him the admiration and votes of large numbers of Americans in the 1928 election.

d. The Klan strenuously campaigned against Smith in the 1928 election. Smith confronted the religious issue

by traveling to Oklahoma City to speak out in the heart of Klan country. Smith went down to resounding defeat in the election but he did not compromise in his basic beliefs.

C. Henry Ford and Anti-Semitism in the 1920's

1. "The new anti-Semitism secured its standard-bearer and its prophet in one of the commanding figures of the day, Henry Ford." Ford was respected, popular, wealthy and a widely discussed possibility for the Presidential nomination. Arthur Schlesinger Jr. says of Henry Ford, "A man of genuis, he was at the same time narrow, ignorant, and mean spirited. ...His impulses were vagrant and confused, and too often he acted on them." A.S. Schlesinger, Jr., The Crisis of the Old Order, p. 73.

2. Two possibilities exist to explain Henry Ford's anti-Semitism:

a. The failure of the Henry Ford Peace Ship venture during World War I (1915-1916) was blamed by Ford on the International Jewish bankers who, he said, wished to make vast profits from the war.

b. The economic slump of 1920 struck Ford. He had borrowed $75,000,000 from eastern bankers in 1919 in order to buy out his partners. The decline of car sales in 1920 presented him with debts and unsold automobiles. His anti-Semitic crusades began at this period.

3. Ford's campaign of anti-Semitic hate was deliberate and long lasting. Ford used his paper, The Dearborn Independent, to broadcast his vicious attacks. The circulation of this paper at one time was 700,000. The articles attacking Jews were base lies helping to nourish existing undercurrents of mistrust and hate. The Dearborn Independent's brand of journalism sowed doubts and assisted other hate organizations in gathering malicious propaganda for their particular malevolent purpose.

a. The Dearborn Independent published a series of so-called documents that were titled The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion. Supposedly this material proved that there was a world-wide Jewish conspiracy to establish Jewish supremacy. Though the Protocols were proven forgeries they kept cropping up in Ford's paper and in other hate-mongering journals at home and abroad.

b. The organizational haters linked the Protocols with the Communist movement in Russia and with the Bolshevik Revolution. This "proved" the authenticity of the Protocols and conveniently linked the Jew with the Communist movement in America. The Jew then could be hated as a Jew and as a member of a subversive anti-American organization.

c. Henry Ford's attacks began in 1920 and continued until 1927 when he publicly apologized while under heavy

attack from several fronts in America. By the time he called a strategic retreat, much damage had been done to the Jew here in the United States and even more so in Europe.

Readings:

A. The New Klan

C.C. Alexander, The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest, chapters 1 & 2.
D.M. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, chapter 4.
K.G. Goode, From Africa to the United States and Then..., p. 120.
J. Higham, Strangers In the Land, pp. 286-299.
R.T. Kerlin, The Voice of the Negro, 1919, pp. 100-125.
I. Leighton, ed., The Aspirin Age.
G. Myers, History of Bigotry in the United States, chapters XX, XXI, XXII.
J.H. Fishel and B.Quarles, The Negro American: A Documentary History, pp. 404-405.
W.P. Randel, The Ku Klux Klan: A Century of Infamy, chapters 11, 12.

B. Al Smith, 1924 and 1928

C.C. Alexander, The Ku Klux Klan in the Southwest, chapters 8,9.
D.M. Chalmers, Hooded Americanism, chapters 28,29, 30,41.
G.Myers, History of Bigotry in the United States, Chapter XXIII.
A.S. Rice, The Ku Klux Klan in American Politics, Chapters III, VI, VII.

C. Henry Ford and Anti-Semitism in the 1920's

J. Higham, Strangers In the Land, p. 265, pp. 280-285, p. 327.
G. Myers, History of Bigotry in the United States, Chapters XXIV, XXV.

IV. The Depression Decade, 1929-1939

The nineteen thirties, a period of violent economic distress, gave rise to a number of soothsayers and demagogues intent on saving this nation from economic, political, or philosophic doom. Among the crusaders were men who preached hate and continued the frenzied attacks of earlier periods in our history.

A. Father Coughlin, a Detroit, Michigan, priest with a charismatic radio speaking voice, took up the cudgel of anti-Semitism and proceeded to instruct great numbers of his radio flock with the fundamentals of hate for the Jew.

1. The Sunday radio audience, according to the Institute of Public Opinion, January, 1939, reached 3,500,000 persons. The audience according to this source was composed mostly of people in the lower income brackets.

2. Coughlin claimed that his paper, Social Justice, had a circulation of 1,000,000, but it seems certain if that figure cannot be confirmed that Social Justice was in the first ranks of anti-Semitic literature in the 1930's.

3. Father Coughlin attempted, in his anti-Semitic attacks, to link Jews with the woes of the Depression Decade and he began a campaign of attacking them as Communists. Coughlin contended that: "(1) Communism was the fructification of Jewish endeavor; (2) that it was to prevent the introduction of Communism by Jews that Nazism came into power in Germany; (3) that there was an international Jewish conspiracy to foist Communism everywhere." (Myers, page 391).

4. Responsible Catholic publications were severely denouncing Father Coughlin's public course of action in his vehement anti-Semitic attacks. There were encounters between Coughlinites and those who were opposed to his ideologies. Wendell Wilkie, in the 1940 Presidential political campaign, repudiated any support from Coughlin and his ilk.

5. By 1940, Father Coughlin was under heavy attack. He abandoned his radio campaign and curtailed some of his other activities. By the year 1942, Social Justice was denied second-class mailing status by the United States government. The professional haters and blind followers had marched on seeking new leadership.

B. Charles A. Lindbergh and the American First Committee

1. Anti-Jew and pro-Nazi groups found in Charles Lindbergh a new hero and rallied around him. Lindbergh's stand was that of an isolationist attempting to keep the United States out of another foreign war. To this end, he was one of the founders of the America First Committee.

2. In a speech at at America First rally on September 11, 1941, Lindbergh charged Jewish, British, and Roosevelt groups with seeking to get America into the war.

3. Lindbergh's coming out in the open with his pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic position made him a broad target for the opposition - Protestant organizations, administration officials, the Jewish Labor Committee, Catholic groups, and other liberal committees. The press denounced Lindbergh and the American First Committee. The Committee absolved itself of anti-Semitic statements on

September 4, 1941. The statement said, "We deplore the injection of the race issue into the discussion of war and peace. It is the interventionists who have done this." (Myers, page 424). Charles A. Lindbergh faded from center stage.

C. Conclusion

1. The Ford, Coughlin, Lindbergh picture is only a very brief glance at anti-Semitism of the 1920's and 1930's. Obviously there is a link between the three forces. The Klan, too, was anti-Semitic - "To the Klan the Jew stood for the whole plot to control America and also for the whole spectrum of urban sin - for pollution of the Sabbath, boot-legging, gambling, and carnal indulgence." (Higham, page 286).

2. The work of the well-financed Ford and Coughlin organizations aided immeasurably to spread hate and confusion in the United States and perhaps elsewhere, too. For example, Ford's anti-Semitic materials describing the Protocols of Zion, were distributed in Ford agencies in foreign lands. Lindbergh, by his visit to fascist countries, lent his famous name to the cause of hate and probably gave it an aura of respectability that it otherwise would not have had.

D. The Communist Party and the Blacks

1. In 1921, the Communist Party attempted to formulate a policy concerning the Blacks. The adopted policy included the aims of social, political, and economic equality. It also stressed the goal of abolishing Jim Crow laws and the necessity of passing right-to-work legislation.

2. "In 1928, the Communist Party adopted a resolution that characterized Afro-Americans in the Black Belt as an oppressed nation entitled to the right of self-determination." (Goode, page 124). As a result of the indifference of other political groups, Blacks joined the Communist Party at this period. During the 1932, 1936, and 1940 elections, the Communist Party's vice-presidential candidate was a Black. Despite these recruiting efforts relatively few Blacks joined the movement.

3. The reasons for failure of the Communist Party in the Black Community included the following:

   a. It was suspect in the Black Community because of its foreign origin.

   b. White Communists shared the same prejudices as less radical Americans.

   c. A strong opposition to anti-Christian Communism by the Black churches.

   d. The Black press and the Black leadership still held a belief in progress through the political system.

4. Enemies of the Blacks used the Bolshevik tag as a convenient symbol to whip up anti-Black sentiment. Union groups attempting to organize Black laborers encountered much of this type of labeling. The Black press characterized the small group of Blacks belonging to the Party as being about as representative of Black thought as Eugene Debs or Emma Goldman were representative of the majority of whites in the nation. W.J. Cash said that

this equation represented the Southern reaction to the labor problems of Gastonia: "labor unions + strikers = Communists + atheism + social equality with the Negro." (Cash, page 353). Thus Communism became a convenient slogan to add to the fears of people who were primarily interested in keeping Blacks "in their place."

E. The Klan Dragons Rise to Meet the Communist Challenge

1. The Ku Klux Klan was in a state of decline in the 1930's. The Klan membership had dropped to about 100,000. Anti-Communism had been mentioned in the 1920's by certain Klan groups but the theme was to be picked up in the 1930's and repeated over and over again in the Depression period.

2. The New Deal was attacked for bringing "Communists to Washington." "Over a thousand Klansmen and women at an Annapolis rally were told that a wave of communism was sweeping the land...." (Chalmers, page 307)

3. In 1936, the great menace was seen by the Klan to be Reds in high places in the government, Communism in the schools subverting the "American way of life," and subtle threats to the Constitution of the United States.

4. The Ku Klux Klan also held that labor organizations were often Communist fronts. There were Klan outbursts toward labor organizing movements in the 1930's. Large anti-labor organizing gatherings, poster wars, cross burnings, floggings and warnings were utilized in attempts to break the union movement in the South.

by claiming that unions desired Whites and Blacks to be on the same social level and selling the idea that Communism and labor organizations were synonymous, the Ku Klux Klan acquired strength in several areas of the nation. The fear of the menace of mysterious Communism linked with the Black man served to strike terror in the hearts of some of the followers of the rituals of the Klan and this proved to be a successful mechanism in Klan propaganda. This technique, effective in many cases, was to be refined and sophisticated in the era following World War II when Soviet Communism struck fear in the hearts of many Americans. Tying the Jew and the Negro with the Communist conspiracy and convenient-ly labeling them was to be refined by McCarthyism techniques in the 1950's.

Readings:

A. Father Coughlin

1. Myers, History of Bigotry in the United States, chapters XXIX, XXX.
2. Leighton, ed., The Aspirin Age, "The Radio Priest and His Flock".
3. Higham, Strangers In the Land, pages 277-286.

B. Charles A. Lindbergh

1. Myers, History of Bigotry in the United States, chapter XXXI.

C. Conclusion

1. Myers, History of Bigotry in the United States, chapters XXX, XXXI.

D. The Communist Party and the Blacks

1. J. Cash, The Mind of the South, pages 333-338.
2. B. Dodd, From Africa to the United States and Then.... pages 124-125.
3. Higham, Strangers In the Land, page 286.
4. Myers, History of Bigotry in the United States, See A & B.

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Vocabulary For Student Use

Racism	Alienation
Racist	Bigot
Racism	Bigotry
Discrimination	Intolerance
Motivation	Communism
Xenophobia	Integration
Civil rights	Separatism
Fundamentalism	McCarthyism
Segregation	NAACP
Anti-Semitic	Subversive
Discrimination	Exploitation

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Questions to Accompany the Unit

1. How does war help to create suspicion, hate and mistrust within a nation?

2. What factors created the climate of fear inside the United States following World War I? Were there similarities in the experiences following World War II? Differences?

3. How is "law and order" defined by the popular press and other media? What is meant by this term in ordinary conversations? How should the term be handled in the context of United States history?

4. List some of the events, underlying feelings, and stereotypes that help to create a totalitarian disposition in this nation.

5. Are there common characteristics, backgrounds, and histories in the careers of William Simmons, Henry Ford, Father Coughlin and Joseph McCarthy? What generalizations, if any, might be historically valid from such a comparative study?

6. Analyze your community environment to determine whether some of the factors that helped create the hate of the 20's, 30's, and 50's is still in existence today. If the conditions are prevalent, determine to what extent. Analyze the issues or fears. What effective measures could possibly be taken to eliminate these groups?

7. Is it possible to bring about institutional changes without completely destroying the entire structure? What are the dangers of creating demagogues in the process of bringing about institutional reform?

8. Examine racist attitudes held by some Americans. Determine the roots of these attitudes in our history. Expose the fallacies in their arguments.

9. Americans have been exposed by the media to a great deal of the wrongs of our society. Does this exposure effectively attack the roots of our racism or does it gloss over the substance and point out exceptions? Present illustrations.

10. Explain Black polarization in terms of the study. What brought the polarization into existence? What, if anything, can be done to mitigate the problem?

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